

General Report: United States Study
Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility

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Highlights of Findings

Pending the analysis of the quantitative data that was gathered to determine any correlations that exist among the variables studied, an attempt to summarize the disparate findings of so many institutions, chosen to capture the diversity in higher education poses some special challenges. Because of the vast differences in size, demographic composition, financial basis and legal incorporation, each site report confirmed the idiosyncratic nature of civic engagement on each campus. These reports present an amalgam of findings, the differences and similarities of which are outlined in the report that follows. A few global generalizations can be made regarding the following concepts and issues:

- Service-learning and community engagement: Many sites treated service learning initiatives as the primary means of providing education for democracy. Sites that were involved in service-learning initiatives seemed to have a greater number of collateral programs working in and with the community.
- Role of leadership: Leadership is critical to engagement. The President's role is especially important both in education for civic engagement and in actual university outreach efforts and community relations.
- Organizational culture: The traditions, customs and practice of governance often delimits the range of engagement by faculty and students in university governance. It can both inhibit or promote democratic processes.
- Cynicism, apathy, and inefficacy: Both faculty and students, even at sites with relatively well developed participatory mechanisms, were generally found to have high levels of cynicism and apathy about the extent of democratic decision making and their ability to influence the process.
- Governance and participation: There was a pervasive belief among both faculty and students that decision-making in universities was concentrated in the hands of an elite few. Consultative processes, anchored in an elaborate and multi-layered committee system, often function and are accepted as legitimate surrogates for direct democratic participation or representation in decision-making.
- Community relations: There is an important difference in terms of effectiveness and in the scope and penetration of community outreach initiatives depending on whether they were integrated into the institutional mission or relied upon the activities of university staff acting on their own initiative as individuals engaging the community.

Introduction: Concepts and Problems of Democracy

During the 1990s public and academic concerns for the related notions of *civil society*, *civic responsibility*, *democracy*, *democratic education*, (and education for democracy), and *civic education* grabbed the attention of policy makers and educators alike. In Europe, the ramifications of a rapidly changing political, social and economic order created an urgency among existing European governments and institutions to adapt,

and to evolve or adopt new institutional and legal arrangements to ensure that the benefits of democracy and liberal markets enjoyed the widest possible extension. The concept of *citizenship*, historically rooted in national identity as linked to the state, has assumed certain transnational characteristics including a particular legal standing at the level of the European Union.¹ Scholars today are wrestling with notions of *dual citizenship*—not between states, but between state and region. This poses multifaceted practical, let alone conceptual, problems while trying to embrace “institutions, states, national and transnational voluntary associations, regions and alliances of regions.”² *Identity* has taken on new meanings and importance as national identities face real or imagined pressure as a result of the impact of migration in creation of new minority groups, which “...can express itself in identity politics.”³ Even as some local political forces are attempting to narrow the definition of *citizenship*, many groups and minorities are seeking more inclusive conceptions of citizenship. The dramatic social and political changes of this period, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, posed unforeseen challenges to political and social institutions and traditions, not the least of which was to national systems of higher education and individual colleges and universities.⁴ One of the central themes of this project is that the mediating role colleges and universities play in working through these issues has been transformed. It is our conviction that the modern university is the key institution in contemporary society for the formulation and transference of stabilizing and legitimizing societal values, the development of the next generation of political elites, and for political socialization in support of democratic values and processes.

In the United States the preoccupations of scholars and those attuned to education policy is motivated by a different set of concerns, but has as its object the same objectives; the development of widely accepted and practiced norms of democracy, and a broadening of political participation and furthering of institutional safeguards of minority rights. These concerns are many and have animated politicians and pundits in addition to the social science community. There is a dominant belief and fear among these groups that a continuing steady decline in civic and political participation threatens the long-term stability and health of cherished democratic institutions and traditions. The litany of ailments attributed to American⁵ democracy are many: widespread lack of interest in public affairs; ever-rising levels of political cynicism and consequent voter apathy; decline in political participation—not only in declining turnouts in elections, but in

¹ ON 1 November 1993, the *Treaty on European Union* (TEU) established a ‘Citizenship of the Union’ which carried with it certain political rights through a revision of Article 8 of the *Treaty Establishing the European Community* (EC Treaty).

² Meehan, E., ‘The debate on citizenship and European Union,’ in Murray, P. and Rich, P. (eds.), *Visions of European Unity*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

³ Leslie Holmes and Philomena Murray, “Citizenship and Identity in Europe” in Holmes and Murray, eds., *Citizenship and Identity in Europe*, Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1999, p. 1.

⁴ The balance of this report will speak of “universities” as a short-hand encompassing the diversity of post-secondary institutions of higher education on both sides of the Atlantic---colleges, community colleges, universities, polytechnics, etc.

⁵ Here and throughout “American” refers to characteristics of citizens and institutions within the United States. It is a common colloquialism not intended to expropriate the identities of other hemispheric neighbors in the ‘Americas,’ and will be dropped should the pilot study be expanded to Canada or countries in Latin America.

alternative methods of engaging political issues of the day; and a general deterioration in respect for the agents and agencies of government. [Insert Putnam] The Co-Chair of the International Consortium that sponsored the project's research in the United States, Dr. Tom Ehrlich calls attention to the impact these trends have had on American campuses, noting that,

“political discussion has declined: Data from annual freshman surveys indicate that the percentage of college freshmen who report frequently discussing politics dropped from a high of 30 percent in 1968 to 15 percent in 1995. Similar decreases were seen in the percentages of those who believe it is important to keep up to date with the political affairs or who have worked on a political campaign.”⁶

Some now consider individualism, long considered a strength and one of the defining aspects of the American character, has become exaggerated into justifications for greed, self-interest, and the vulgarity of immediate gratification. Consequently, the moral foundations of society are increasingly characterized by a perverse situational ethics—the fear of many that this will devolve into further polarization of interests among divergent groups, and an irreversible decline in common societal values. Alexander Astin, whose annual surveys of incoming freshmen is the foundation of longitudinal assessments of such changes on campuses over the last 30 years states the challenge to American higher education starkly:

“If we want our students to acquire the democratic virtues of honesty, tolerance, empathy, generosity, teamwork, and social responsibility, we have to demonstrate those qualities not only in our individual professional conduct, but also in our institutional policies and practices.”⁷

The Special Place of the University

This disengagement and decline of the general populace from democratic participation and in an internalized sense of civic responsibility is especially marked among the young.⁸ The declines in political participation noted above have occurred despite a modest increase during the last decade in civic education at the elementary and secondary levels.

⁶ Ehrlich, Thomas, Civic Responsibility and Higher Education, Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education and The Oryx Press, 2000, p. xxii.

⁷ Astin, Alexander, “What Higher Education Cando in the Cause of Citizenship,” The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 6, 1995 [get on-line citation or actual page number]

⁸ Here, “college aged” students, including pre-freshmen and recent alumni. Early political socialization studies in the 1950s and 1960s focused on the influence of elementary and secondary education and other development aspects of pre- and adolescent youth. It was generally regarded that by the time students reached college, their political consciousness, represented by such things as party identification, and scores on political ideological scales, was determined. The presumption of this research project (and an unstated hypothesis) is that the phenomena of delayed adolescence, or what we prefer to call the deferral of adult responsibilities (independence, jobs, marriage, family responsibilities, etc.) has fundamentally altered previous generalizations about the political socialization of youth. Contemporary delays in the onset or achieving of political consciousness or identity underscores the salient role of the university today in shaping democratic attitudes and a sense of civic responsibility.

The foundational belief of this project is that universities must assume a leading responsibility for research on and education for democracy on a global scale. It is not enough to rely on the transference of knowledge, ideas and techniques through traditional mechanisms of scholarly writing and research. Universities today are the venue for political participation in neighboring communities and wider society. Universities can provide the platform for a new social architecture that advances the related objectives of greater political participation, and the internalization of civic values. Because of the organizational nature of universities and today's information technologies, the intermingling and cross-fertilization of ideas, pedagogical models, and the replication dynamic of the research process now occurs on a global scale. Universities offer international bridges, and serve as national gateways for the sharing and dissemination of advances in the physical and social sciences, and for the influence of ideas and values shaped by the humanities and liberal arts. Universities have always been involved in the advancement of human civilization and in support of national priorities. They play an enlarged role in the expansion of economic activity through the development and provision of human capital and technological and scientific advances. Today democratic development is the primary challenge of society, yet most institutions of higher education have remained trapped by their own inertia of traditional practices in administration, teaching, and research.

The instrumentality of universities in advancing science and technology, in developing human capital, and contributing to the literary and artistic culture of society is a widely accepted proposition. Universities have also served as instruments of national policies, whether in providing research and technical expertise or in fostering international competitiveness. The burgeoning demand for and increased access to higher education places this social institution at the center of societal change and political and economic development. It has become critical to the development of democratic values and practices and the civil education of the young. One of the collaborating researchers on this project, Ivar Bleiklie and his colleagues summarize these challenges for education policy:

“The assumption that higher education institutional developments and processes of democratization are related does not mean that higher education necessarily has become more democratic in the sense that its form and content are better suited to popular needs and wishes. Neither does it mean that higher education automatically has become more democratic in the sense that it serves better an open society with a free formation of opinion, free transmission of existing knowledge and free search for new knowledge. However, it does mean that processes of institutional change in higher education and the nation state are closely related and deserve further education and the means that policy-making within the democratic institutions of the state somehow can be counted on to affect higher education institutions.”⁹

⁹ Ivar Bleiklie, Roar Hostaker, and Agnete Vabo, Policy and Practice in Higher Education: Reforming Norwegian Universities, London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000, p.82.

Why is issue and project are significant

Democratic political development is the most urgent issue of our time. Declining levels of political participation in Europe and US is a widespread problem, and is particularly acute among the young. It may only be a slight exaggeration to say that the future of democracy at stake. Colleges and universities are widely acknowledged as the central, strategic social institution in the 21st century. Colleges and universities, moreover, may be the core institution shaping the political socialization of young.

Major efforts have been made at both the secondary and post-secondary levels of education at the propagation of the virtues and the mechanics of market economies. In the United States there are even regular assessments of economic “literacy.” Yet, the foundation of market economies is the freedom democracy conveys and the values of transparency and accountability that are the foundations of trust in both economic and social transactions. It is time that equal attention be given to the teaching of democratic values, an understanding of democratic institutions and processes, and to the complementary values imbued by a deeper and broader civic education.

This is a basic concern of this project: to concern ourselves with seriously responding to the decline and indifference in traditional as well as new ways of political participation. There is a shared unease among faculty and administrators, and governmental agencies responsible for education over the future of democracy. At this time universities also face three related challenges: “corporatization” as a response to the global competitive pressures; cultural demands to maintain local identities even as universities move toward greater access and increased exchanges; and fostering democracy both within and outside of the university to help stabilize society through the institutionalization of fair conflict resolution mechanisms and political participation.

There is a growing sense that the purposes and espoused desired outcomes of education are increasingly compromised by the intersection of two dynamics—one relating to student choice and academic behavior and the other to the organization and structure of universities’ survival and perpetration. The former concerns the changes in the academic choices of students which is shaped by their legitimate concerns about post-graduate employment and income security. The latter refers to the market-oriented response of post-secondary institutions in response to their own real fiscal pressures and the related demands of government and the public for universities to enhance the international competitiveness of the nation, provide relevant skills and technologies, and to address pressing national social needs. This has resulted in an increasing commodification of higher education as student consumerism and market forces have resulted in a growing emphasis on vocational programs at the expense of a broader liberal arts education. At the most basic level this can result in a pernicious rationalization of resource allocations within university administration that increasingly links instructional productivity to the fiscal bottom line. At the highest level it compromises the ability of universities to meet their most fundamental responsibility to society—the creation of an informed citizenry, reinforcement of norms pertaining to the peaceful resolution of disputes and the rule of law, and the promotion of positive social change that the advance

of knowledge can produce, and the enhancement of social and political institutions to maintain social stability in the face of increasingly rapid social, political and economic changes. In essence, these are the requirements of democratic societies that traditionally were fostered by the study of the liberal arts. Commodification in part results from changing information technologies and the internationalization of scholarship. Information in vast quantities is now shared throughout all strata of society and across national boundaries. Information has become a commodity and as such, dissolves the conceptual and analytical nexus between information and knowledge. The commodification of higher education challenges the abilities of universities to develop critical thinking, judgment, ability to contextualize, and the analytical skills that support and enhance civic engagement and sense of civic responsibility, and political participation required for democracy to thrive and endure.

Aims of the Project

Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility is an international research project based on the joint efforts of the Council of Europe and the International Consortium on Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy in the United States. The following U.S. higher educational associations represented on the U.S. Executive Committee of the Consortium: American Association for Higher Education, American Association of Colleges and Universities, American Council on Education, and Campus Compact. The Council of Europe's Committee on Higher Education and Research is the administrative and operational center of activity for the European research. The University of Pennsylvania is the organizational center for the United States' research as well as for the research project and International Consortium as a whole.

The research project on Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility is focused on institutions of higher education as strategic institutions in democratic political development. It is a cross-national study, comparing universities in fifteen European countries, both new and established democracies, and fifteen colleges and universities in the United States. It addresses the actual activities of institutions of higher education that support democratic values and practices; an assessment of their capabilities and dispositions to promote democracy; and dissemination of resources to improve the contributions of higher education to democracy on the campus, and to the local community, and society. This research project is a pilot study of students, faculty, and administration and their relationship to local government, schools, business, media, and civic groups and will serve as the basis for a subsequent large-scale study in Europe and the United States. It seeks to provide a basis for the analysis and formulation of recommendations, and distribution of materials and approaches that can be used by institutions of higher education to discuss and decide their responsibilities for civic education and democracy.

This is also the first Trans-Atlantic empirical study of its kind. Most of the research on education for democracy and civic engagement are largely descriptive and rest on their normative and prescriptive propositions. This research will make general academic contributions to a better understanding of many issues and dynamics in democracy education. In focusing on universities as *sites* of citizenship, it makes a serious examination of a core social institution shaping democratic development. It will provide an empirical basis for developing theories of democratic development in the global era. It will develop instruments for assessing, understanding, and increasing the levels of civic responsibility in different societies. It will provide an analysis for understanding the relationships among pedagogical approaches, organizational strategies, and the relationship of universities to their local communities to broader dynamics of democratic political participation and processes. A by-product of this research will be the development of approaches, methodologies, and networks for advancing democratic and civic education on the basis of comparative research that goes beyond the mere sharing of examples of best practices.

The comparative dimensions of this project breaks new ground in the study of the bases of civil society and the role of the university in promoting civic and democratic education. The comparisons of educational and administrative practices in the United States with those in Europe is not unique simply because it is comparative (there is a long honored tradition of comparative collaborations), but because of the scale and scope of the collaboration, the empirical basis of the research, and the public-private cooperation between universities, NGO's, national agencies, and intergovernmental organizations.

The primary purpose of this pilot study is to design a larger, sample-based cross-national, comparative research project of universities and colleges as socializing agents for democratic values and practices among their students and their local communities. The objective is to map the variety of activities of universities and colleges and to test selected instruments for assessing what is being done and to what effect. The U.S. pilot project is largely funded by the National Science Foundation; the European pilot project is supported by the Council of Europe.

General Findings: Similarities and Differences of Sites of Citizenship

The diversity of institutions reported on in this study poses special challenges to any effort at generalization. For more depth of analysis and a richer description of each university included in the study, refer to the attached Compendia of site reports. It must be understood that the primary goal was to inventory the scope of activity and policies and practices of universities as sites of citizenship and to pre-test survey instruments and research protocols for subsequent revision. Statistical analysis remains to be done on the data collected. Yet general observations and conclusions from the site reports (collaborating researcher's monographs) provide the necessary descriptive backdrop for the data analysis and preliminary insights into universities as sites of citizenship.

The United States' context

The governance problem: Influence and Power over processes, administration, decision-making

One overarching reality that seems to come through collectively in the reports is the important distinction and contrasts that need to be made regarding formal practices of “shared governance” and actual practices. Each institution exhibits a different organizational culture and tradition of custom and practice that shapes the actual exercise of authority at a particular institution. Despite such structural differences judgments and perceptions about the degree of openness of decision-making or the nature and breadth of participation are possible.

One of the difficulties in assessing participation and influence depends of the issue or subject matter in consideration. Because Boards of Trustees or Boards of Regents are the legal corporate authorities, there is a tendency to perceive that “all decisions” ultimately rest with them, or with their appointed representative officer of the university, the President. The extent to which the university community, particularly the faculty, perceive that they have some degree of input into decisions regarding resource allocation and financial support, or are at the least solicited for their opinions, there tend to be more favorable assessments of democratic participation and more benevolent assessment of boards and presidential authority. At some institutions, particularly smaller schools operating in a tight fiscal environment, informants said that all issues revolve around budgets and finance. One informant expressed the frustration of many noting that budgetary power can “be used to effectively strangle programs and initiatives in which the administration is not interested and build programs which administrators favor.”

Consideration of issues other than budgetary issues, revealed more variation in faculty and student participation in governance. There are instances of success of faculty or students advocacy having an impact on administration decisions ranging from the setting of the academic calendar or the more weighty decision to remove a faculty member. In general, faculty tended to feel they had more of a role in governance than students. While there are extensive formal institutional roles and requirements for student participation in various governance bodies, more often than not both faculty and students felt that student participation amounted to little more than “lip service.” There were also some differing impressions about opportunities for student self-governance. However, even if functionally true in terms of influence over final decisions, student participation and representation on university committees was often considered to help establish an “ethos” for democracy and participation.

Religiously-affiliated or sectarian colleges compounded the dilemmas of participation and democratic decision-making because of the mandates and traditional obligations imposed on the usual governance structure of the university. In one instance, because Catholic University is the only pontifically chartered university among American universities affiliated with the Catholic church, the legal basis of incorporation creates

constraints on personnel policies and academic freedom that are not issues at other American institutions. By laws on “ecclesiastical Faculties and Pontifical Schools” affected, departments of theology, philosophy and religious studies. Other sectarian school’s, such as Wheaton College in this study, may exhibit strong institutional commitments to democratic values, but have an organizational culture and hierarchical decision-making structure, with authority vested at the top. Such arrangements may constrain and restrict the teaching of democratic values and possibly the promotion of civic engagement. Within these schools, it appears that faculty governing councils are only deliberative and consultative in nature. Nearly all major substantive policy decisions are initiated by the administration. Wheaton College may be illustrative in regard to a lack of adversarial or advocacy role for faculty or students, which is constrained by a “peculiar strand of evangelical pietism that dominates the ethos of the institution.”¹⁰

Is there a clash between an administration’s public relations and stated mission and objectives and the reality of involving students in decision-making? Making democracy work is itself hard work and requires on-going, sustainable commitment to processes that may produce hardships. Real shared governance is time-consuming, at times conflictual, and requires a willingness to support the process even after maintaining a losing position.

One process issue that was of great concern at many of the sites was a perceived lack of transparency in governance processes. “Closed door” decision-making exacerbated the beliefs that faculty had no sense of ownership. There was (perhaps ironically if they have no way of influencing decisions) a belief in the need to be “vigilant,” but faculty had limited time and energy to do so. One site reported that many closed meetings created a “culture of secrecy.” But at what level is decision-making to be open to the public or to mass democratic participation? Practical matters of administration dictate that not every decision be debated and scrutinized. Other institutions, primarily state-owned schools, required that all meetings be open to public by law. Transparency of decision-making is facilitated by media coverage of various board and central administration meetings. Yet, most faculty, even in these situations, did not see the administration as democratic in its relations with the faculty. While there is a recognition of the general hierarchical nature of administration, there is also a general belief that “democratic practice is the norm widely held.” At most schools there was a “genuine interest” in allowing all constituents and stakeholders express their views, though their management function and role as mediators of disputes and decision-makers in the allocation of resources appears at times to be at odds with the larger goals and principles of free speech.

The one dimension of the governance issue and democratic decision-making which had general, though perhaps not universal, agreement on was that decision-making was concentrated in the hands of a few. In consequence, both faculty and students frequently questioned the extent to which decision-making is open and democratic. While not uniform across all cases, many informants claimed that their institution could be characterized as being not very democratic in its decision-making. Too often decisions

¹⁰ Ashley Woodiwiss, *Wheaton College Monograph*, p. 4.

by the administration were made unilaterally rather than through a participatory or consultative framework.

Such broad conclusions were often at odds with examples of specific issues or processes. One such example was an institution where governance issues did not usually get raised, even though constitutionally provided for in the Faculty Senate Constitution. Much reliance was on informal mechanisms for communicating issues of concern among faculty, who might work them out in subcommittees or in other informal consultations with the administration. Moreover, in state-owned institutions and those where union contracts were in effect for faculty or staff, certain issues were governed as much by the terms of the contract (often negotiated by state-wide bargaining) as by decision-making processes and governance rules within the particular university.

Most sites reported mechanisms and traditions for the exercise due process and consultation. Sites varied on the extent and means of communication of concerns and provision of input into decision-making. This is an important observation and is important to highlight because the consultative role of the faculty and students characterizes so much of the governance processes in American higher education. Consultative processes often serve as a surrogate for more direct or democratic decision-making. The illusive nature of consultation and the fine line that exists in judging whether an institution is characterized by democratic governance or an autocratic hierarchy is revealed by the comment of one researcher:

“Traditionally, the Trustees stay clear of day-to-day campus affairs. Traditionally, the administration does not attempt to manipulate or override faculty prerogatives, and the President has asserted many times that the educational mission of the college is entirely for the faculty to govern. Tradition, of course, is not law or policy....”¹¹

The case of Trinity College is illustrative. One can contrast “intra-stratum” and “inter-stratum” communication and relationships (i.e., between and among administration, faculty, students and staff). Generally the researcher noted “intra-stratum” relations to be democratic. But when issues arise that cross stata, conflict emerges through two tactics, “encroachment” and “protest.” The direct action of encroachment, such as sit-ins, is rare. More common is the expression of protest through multiple channels of communication on campus. Elected bodies monitor issues and serves as a “watchdog” of governance over administration decisions. Conflicts do arise and administration decisions are challenged. However, resolution of disputes are normally worked out in the context of the organizational traditions that exist on campus. When protest arises, it raises governance issues that may challenge existing authority relationships. But in a historical context with a tradition of free expression, or at the least high value placed on academic freedom, consultative processes and communication seems critical not only to the resolution of disputes, but ultimately in assessments of ‘democratic’ environments and decision-making. Campuses with strong consultative tradition or administrators that meet frequently with students and faculty or solicit input into decisions are generally regarded as “more democratic.”

¹¹ Dan Lloyd, Trinity College Monograph, p. 5

Most shared governance bodies such as Academic Senates or University Councils are granted legislative power on matters of general education policy. But they are most often largely a recommending body that sends decisions to the President who may in turn transmit them to the Board of Regents. It is important in this regard to note the distinction between functional influence over final decisions and the legal authority to execute them.

It seems that the problem of interpreting the extent of democratic governance in universities is confused by the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of the central administration and Boards in addition to their oversight and final authority in the decision-making function. How do we interpret and resolve the function of consultation, recommendation and “legislation” in academic governance? Is the consultative function limiting in the exercise of democracy? In instances where the “final authority” rests with a President or Board of Trustees or Regents, does this mean there is no democratic participation?

Boards and Central Administration: The Role of Trustees, Chancellors, Rectors, Presidents

It is hard to generalize because of mix of college and university types. As mentioned above, the Board of Trustees (or Regents in state-systems) of a college or university has a legal and fiduciary responsibility for university operations and in state systems is held accountable to the government. Some universities are controlled by a government appointed Boards of Regents that have complete authority over all levels of decision making. Presidents, Chancellors and vice-Chancellors all serve as the executive officers of such boards and are appointed by them, and serve as agents of implementation of policy. Currently in some states, moves are afoot to begin devolving some of the historic authority of the Boards of Regents to individual institutions in the state system with boards representing the local area. This can lead to uncertainty about how governance structures will be re-organized. At one institution such reorganization plans is seen “as a threat to faculty well-being and excellence” because of “historic anti-intellectualism” in the United States and fears of attempts to impose ‘community standards’ on universities.

In many institutions the exercise of authority is very much “top – down” proposition. Boards vary, however, in how consultative they are in their deliberations, and some “frequently” solicits faculty and student input into their decisions. However, Boards can be very intrusive, and in smaller colleges has assumed direct authority over several aspects of student life and even in one instance into the curriculum. Boards are frequently seen as “remote and imperious”, especially by students. This could be a function of student’s lack of knowledge and general cynicism to authority or a reflection of the fact that students are institutional “short-timers.” Most students do not know how to communicate their concerns to the board. Most Board meetings are open to the public, though this seems to be a function of size and whether the Board serves over a private or public institution. Several small institutions in the study reported that Board decisions

are made in closed sessions. Likewise, faculty in small, private, religiously-affiliated schools perceived power to be concentrated in the Board of Trustees, concluding in one instance that it had a “palpable governing presence” in all campus discussions.

While there were instances of lack of student or faculty representation on Boards, most allowed for or were required by law (in state systems) to have student representation on the Board. One Board in the study claimed to welcome student representation on the board, though not with voting rights. Historically it is fair to say that students get a “mixed reception” when they raise “uncomfortable questions” at Board meetings.

Central administration was also frequently characterized as “top-down” in decision-making. Dean’s and Vice-Presidents are typically appointed at the discretion of the President though it is unclear how this appointive power affects democratic decision-making. The role of the President varies a great deal more than the role of the Boards. Administrative style, legal authority and inclination to promote shared governance can not be readily distinguished by whether the President presides over a public or private institution nor by size or other affiliation. In most instances, faculty and students are able to exercise an advisory role, or have some consultative channel to give input into decisions or to express concerns.

As will be noted below in discussion of community relations, the President can play a key role in determining a university’s commitment to civic education and to the promotion of democratic processes and decision-making on campus. While many see these activities as implicit and a natural product of the university’s role in society, others take a more proactive leadership role. The President of San Francisco State has made civic engagement the keystone of his administration and serves on state-wide and national bodies for the promotion of service-learning and democracy education through civic engagement.

Civic Education in the Mission of the University

As mentioned above, the responsibility of the university for civic education and the promotion of democratic values is often understood as implied in the mission of the university. In some instances it is made explicit, as with in the preamble of the Charter of the University of Georgia, which notes, “As it is the distinguishing happiness of free governments that civil Order should be the Result of choice and not necessity, and the common wishes of the People become the Laws of the Land, their public prosperity and even existence very much depends upon suitably forming the minds and morals of their citizens.”¹²

Most sites did not report if mission statements made explicit references to the tasks of educating for democracy, but most felt it was clearly implied. Mission statements make references to preparing students for “full participation” in global society or to fostering respect for differences among people in order to produce “an enlightened

¹² From the Charter of the University of Georgia, 1785. Quoted by Daniel Hope in the University of Georgian monograph.

and informed citizenry.” Democratic values and civic engagement are often considered implicit to the university’s mission, even to the point where explicit reference to them seem obvious or superfluous. This is represented in the view that “the disciplining experience of learning and research is one that is directly translatable to civic responsibility or is itself a civic exercise.” A similar inference is made in the suggestion that teaching that encourages critical thinking is assumed to facilitate democratic political participation.

Though many institutions do not make explicit reference to educating for democracy or to teaching the duties and responsibilities that come with citizenship in their mission statements, a recent trend is to see such references in strategic planning documents. Eg., Florida’s State University System Strategic Plan identifies goals and objectives of “willingness to perform the obligations of citizenship, including the right to vote and the adherence to the rule of law” as a core value and purpose of state universities.¹³ At the University of Georgia, the strategic plan aims to assure cultural diversity and sensitivity to cultural diversity in programs and procedures. The University of Pennsylvania’s current strategic plan, “An Agenda for Excellence” also incorporates civic education as a primary goal in its educational mission.

Student participation and voting and involvement in university governance

Many institutions have made provisions for the formal representation of students on academic senate, university disciplinary and student life committees. Nearly all student associations that manage student clubs, organizations and various aspects of student life have budgets and programs governed by a student-elected leadership. Students also have representation on many university auxiliary service agencies, such as the student union and bookstore. There are many broadly defined roles for students in governance issues: in student government; on student judiciary panels (some with exclusive jurisdiction over all cases of violation of the rules governing student behavior); and in representation on Academic Senates and Boards of Trustees. At one extreme of involvement, San Francisco State University, students are also represented on the University Budget Committee and other campus and departmental committees with voting rights. Most typically though, students are most active and have influential roles in residential living councils and student life associations. Even on campuses where students feel disenfranchised or having no influence over administrative or academic decisions, students participate in student governance on issues they have some control over—such as allocation of student fees. Though students are frequently represented (occasionally with voting rights) on many university committees, a solid majority feel underrepresented. Foreign student feel even more un-represented. This could be due to their being new to campus and not knowing the cultural context for participation and what their rights they have.

Participation in larger governance issues across all campuses surveyed is “uneven”. Influence may be more by moral suasion and by raising issues primarily focused on

¹³ Virginia Chanley, Florida International University monograph, p. 4.

academic and curricular issues by bringing them to the attention of the faculty and administration (though this seems a rather benevolent view and does not assess how far this influence might extend). Though student participation in university governance is small and voting turnout in campus elections rarely exceeds 15 or 20 percent, the individual students who are involved claim to be taken seriously. There is widespread cynicism and apathy regarding student government with a “majority of disinterested students.” This is, however, in contradistinction to the sentiments of students overall. Most students feel that a small, exclusive group hold most leadership and political positions. They also feel that the administration and/or Boards have too much influence in picking students for service on university committees. Hence, the sentiment that this is an ‘elitist’ group, with access to the President. Because so few students participate in university governance, rule enforcement and protocols are highly contentious and “are a source of legitimacy, particularly since the elections themselves are often poorly attended, majorities are weak and electoral mandate tenuous.”¹⁴ This is typical of even the campuses with a great number of students involved in voluntary or service activities or in campus organizations.

Students (primarily at residential schools) in general admitted to not taking interest in local politics, and as mentioned below in discussing community relations, are often at odds with the local community. A few of the schools in the study had much institutionalized and active encouragement of voting. Students feel there is not enough, or little opportunity to get hear political issues debated on campus. Most did not think university encouraged public debate; and were graded poorly or fair on promoting civic responsibility. Ironically, some faculty informants noted that efforts to encourage students to participate more in the issues of the day have “flopped pretty significantly.”

Several researchers reported that the problem may be that students are “comfortable” or in other word, complacent. Students do not see how civic responsibility relates to their immediate lives. There is little organized political activity, or political party activity—even “Young Republicans” and “Young Democrats” are considered more as another student club than political organizations. On a more optimistic note, students do tend to be more animated by issues within the university as opposed to the outside world. The explanation for this may be that students have many more channels for participation as “citizens of the university community.” Student government appears to be largely advisory and consultative to the university administration and like most campuses, focuses largely on issues of student life.

So it appears that student governance is an important vehicle for those *who choose to become active* to become involved. Those students who are active believe that their voices are heard and make a difference. But it is important to note that in general they feel they have made a difference in areas that are really non-governmental: student life issues such as furniture purchases, library hours, better pay for teaching assistants, and accountability over the use of student fees.

¹⁴ Brian Murphy, San Francisco State Monograph, p. 4 – 5.

This may be related to the larger issue of non-participation by the majority of students and the beliefs that most institutions are characterized by elitism and decision-making by the few. ‘Activists’ may actually bring their disposition to participation with them into college. One researcher noted that “these students self-consciously take on roles of promoting citizenship and democracy by exercising free speech and advocating more open decision-making practices.”¹⁵ Students do manage their own activities. Is it possible that we confuse management with democratic participation? But because student management of their activities fees and activities is often based on elections or representative processes, it is at least a means of learning democratic control and participation.

Curriculum Issues

There is universal agreement that the role of the faculty is “paramount” in almost all academic matters. One point of friction between students and faculty is over curriculum issues. Students are formally represented on many curriculum committees but with uncertain effect. Students are invited, but not very influential (“because turnover is high?”). Students must fight hard for any representation or influence—which is regarded by faculty as nominal. In other curriculum issues, there are forums and evaluations to get student input and feedback, but many consider process “relatively meaningless.” This probably highlights the limits and constraints on the roles students can play because of their lack of experience, perspective and “big picture” of purposes of curriculum and expertise, to be able to determine what is required for particular pedagogical purposes to meet what educational objective. Student demand for new courses and programs can drive new curricular initiatives and helps to stimulate faculty support for new curricula. However, general belief is that students are engaged but uninformed resulting in deference to the faculty on most curricular issues.

There was a consensus that certain disciplines are more conducive to the teaching of democracy and its ideals, and to the active promotion of civic values and civic engagement. The social sciences and humanities as a rule do a better job of both teaching and promoting these civic objectives than the natural sciences. The degree of political engagement by students varies enormously by discipline, with students in business and the sciences less engaged in community affairs than students in social sciences, humanities and ethnic studies. Many institutions seem to rely on the ‘regular’ curriculum for students to learn about democracy or on extracurricular or outside internships and field experiences to become engaged with the world around them. (This is what we might call the ‘passive’ approach to democratic education.)

Reporting of democratic pedagogical practices was mixed throughout the monographs. Here again, inferences were normally drawn from the existence of courses that deal with political theory, political participation, constitutional issues, or sociological phenomena regarding the organization and understanding of society as a whole. There is a perception-reality gap between the availability of courses and programs that encourage

¹⁵ Patricia Bennett, University of Iowa monograph, p. 7.

civic engagement or deal with democracy and citizenship. At many sites there was no concerted program to study democratic theory or practice outside the ‘regular’ disciplinary offerings mentioned above. State-affiliated institutions may require by law that students must take certain courses in American government and politics to meet graduation requirements. It is unclear if such requirements are explicit about the teaching of democracy or pluralism per se, or if these courses are construed as being representative of democratic education. James Chesney and Otto Feinstein have noted that one of the difficulties in relying on traditional disciplinary approaches and curricular requirements in promoting civic literacy relates to a fundamental constraint in the design of courses and requirements. Advances in analytical models, the explosion of information now available and the disciplinary demands for coverage of topical areas “reduces the time available for the thought and action skills essential to civic literacy and thus civic empowerment.”¹⁶

Yet many of the institutions reported that the study of democracy (eg., “...entire programs devoted to the study of democratic institutions in political science, public administration, urban studies, sociology, history, business, education and the health sciences.” Here again it appears that the study of democracy is attributed to these departments and programs by inference and association with activities that are better construed as examples of civic engagement. The assumption seems to be that there is learning about democracy through required extracurricular activity, such as work in the community or other “direct participation in public institutions.” It remains unclear how a social work internship or a clinical nursing experience teaches democratic values in the same way as a paralegal position in the public defender’s office or working on a political campaign.

Service-learning initiatives and curricular options existed on most campuses included in the study, though the degree of involvement in it varied as much as the diversity of the types and size of schools examined. There seems to be a strong connection between service learning programs and courses and involvement in campus politics. One site reported that campus leaders were also frequently involved in community projects or service learning and that this stimulated them to also engage in campus politics. The most highly developed sites had leadership that promoted faculty and student participation in deliberative processes and also had a wide-range of complementary programs and initiatives involving the community. One service-learning initiative emphasized a stronger collaborative relationship between students and community partners so students could learn from the people they were serving. Another view expressed that much of the effort at promoting these values and initiatives are internally focused within the university itself, and ironically was not community-focused, and suffer from some lack of coordination.

Where presidents and central administration endorsed principles of service-learning and civic engagement, the number of opportunities increased. Where the president was committed to systemic change, the mobilization of resources and of faculty

¹⁶ James D. Chesney and Otto Feinstein, Building Civic Literacy and Citizen Power, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997, p. 95.

support and student participation brought significant changes in the internal organizational and decision-making environment. Where leadership was indifferent or not engaged in the promotion of civic education outside the regular curriculum or where power and decision-making were highly concentrated and hierarchical, there were few initiatives. By extension, it appears that these institutions that had new, experimental or limited programs for civic education and community engagement, were largely reactive or “defensive” in their approach and were responding to the external environment as a threat to the internal safety and cohesiveness of the campus. Here again, strong leadership and commitment to systemic change produced more proactive engagement both within the college or university (between administration, faculty, staff and students) and shared responsibility with the community for addressing issues of mutual concern.

Several sites viewed the active effort to integrate multicultural themes across the curriculum—addressing issues pertaining to race and ethnicity across in different disciplines—as instrumental to fostering democratic values. At these sites, a majority of students surveyed believed their studies “prepared them to work in an ethically diverse society.” One institution has changed its curriculum to contextualize it in terms of its local environment and the world, even requiring students to perform some kind of community service while studying abroad. The local (frequently urban) context is addressed through curriculum that employs the community as a resource and venue for learning.

Faculty: roles, perceptions, involvement

Faculty reported dichotomous views. While holding strong beliefs in their autonomy and self-governance and shared decision-making in universities, they frequently reported disillusionment with the realities of power and influence in the university.

Faculty culture is “deeply participatory.” While faculty tend to exercise full discretion over academic matters, there is a sense that this influence is constrained or limited due to administrative control over budgets. There is a sense that “democratic expectations” are maintained through a consultative process in nearly all policy decisions. While many faculty see themselves as “self-governed,” and members of this participatory culture, there were wide variations in their belief in their ability to influence administrative decisions. The strongest tradition of self-governance is in faculty “direct control” of many aspects of curriculum and college life. The extent of the consultative functions the faculty discussed above often determine their influence. Typically faculty (through committee structures) “decide” on matters such as the allocation of new faculty positions; promotions; curriculum; student academic standing and academic integrity—but the final approval rests with the President or the Board.

On campuses with highly concentrated decision-making at the top, repeated frustration with attempts to influence decisions can lead to self-suppression of faculty due to frustration with the process. The result is a culture where faculty believe that their opinions and efforts have little effect. In these situations, service on university

committees or taking part in the planning process likewise produces cynicism, due to the time and energy (with little or no results) that goes into it. However, even in these situations the faculty maintained a “moral influence” on decision-makers and if sufficiently united and motivated, can compel Boards to replace Presidents and other administration officers. In this sense, even in instances where the faculty’s role in governance is diminished, the traditions of academic culture and faculty prerogatives serve a legitimizing function of administrative decision-making.

In the absence of strong administrative leadership or financial incentives, faculty commitments to developing or participating in civic engagement initiatives is constrained by the “compartmentalization” of a reward structure that has traditionally valued individual efforts within traditional disciplinary-based department organization. The idea of service as a faculty responsibility is undervalued by most universities. As long as teaching and research (publications) are the main criteria for promotion and tenure there will be no incentives for faculty to take a more proactive role in civic engagement. There may be some ironies here. For example, the increasing complexities of administration and decreasing rewards for taking leadership positions (less esteem in colleagues eyes; discontinuance of research and publication; making unpopular decisions) has made the departmental chairmanship a “hot potato” at many schools. There is a growing resignation among faculty over their ability to influence decisions concerning investments, facilities, admissions, even teaching loads. “Service”—long a vital expectation of faculty duties and obligations, risks becoming a retreat from power as faculty have become prisoners of a proliferation of faculty committees. These committees exercise oversight over various university functions and activities which vary in effectiveness and influence from university to university.¹⁷ It may be the exhaustive (some would say ‘exhausting’) committee system in university governance convolutes a clear understanding and determination of the decision-making processes in universities, and thus, the means to assess democratic practices and participation. It is certainly a major source of cynicism and jaundiced attitudes about notions of the “democratic university.” On some campuses, committees only have power to make recommendations

¹⁷ Participatory governance and “self-governance” is illustrated by this partial list of over 40 committees the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania serve on, which is not atypical of colleges and universities throughout the United States: The University Council has committees for: Admissions & Financial Aid; Bookstore; Communications; Community Relations; Facilities; International Programs; Libraries; Personnel Benefits; Pluralism; Recreation & Intercollegiate Athletics; Research; Safety & Security; Quality of Student Life; Open Expression; Professional Students Association; Honorary Degrees; and Disabilities. In addition there are separate Faculty Senate Committees pertaining to Academic Freedom & Responsibility; Economic Status of the Faculty; On Conduct; Administration; Faculty; Publication Policy for Almanac; Students & Educational Policy; and a Faculty Grievance Commission.

Furthermore, within the various professional schools there are additional layers of committee structure, witness one example of the Nursing School that has standing faculty committees on Academic Advising; Admission and Academic Standards; Awards; Ethics; Instructional Innovation; Master’s Curriculum; Practice Professional Development/Life Long Learning; Research; and on the Undergraduate Curriculum. Council Committees: 2000-2001

Faculty also serve on departmental committees, Search Committees and numerous ad hoc committees.

and are in this sense, “exclusionary” in terms of democratic decision-making. Where hope of influencing decision-making declines and consultation is limited only to curricular matters, faculty can become complacent. Many faculty see irony in any effort at the teaching of democracy or in implementing democratic pedagogies in their classrooms, when the rest of the institution is relatively undemocratic.

Sense of Efficacy and Inefficacy

One theme that seems to come through in many of the reports is an overall assessment that students on many campuses are “comfortable” and that this comfort is perhaps a source of complacency. In such case, they do not take full advantage of the opportunities afforded them for greater participation and involvement in governance. Such a view may be important in considering the source of so much cynicism of the kind “the same people run everything here.” Some faculty noted that while the university provides adequate funding of programs and activities (some even noted “perhaps too much”) that students are not taking full advantage of what’s available.

Does cynicism with administration and processes really have to do with organizational culture? Two explanations of so much general malaise about the ability to make a difference or influence decisions on campus seem to intersect: the lack of encouragement by faculty and administration for greater participation of students, and a lack of knowledge and initiative by students themselves. Another aspect of organizational culture that affects attitudes of participation is the impact of changes in administrative and bureaucratic processes that have been labeled the ‘corporatization’ of the university. Professional management and outsourcing of many service functions have produced a sense of deferral to the administration and increasing non-involvement by faculty in certain budget and management issues of the university. Students and faculty alike felt that running a university like a business impedes democratic participation in governance. It also impacts on the trust exhibited or felt. (However, there were degrees of belief in this. Some felt there was no trust between faculty and the administration while others thought trust was fairly high, though with some ‘honest cynicism’. At most universities, the climate was mixed. As a result, there is a good degree of ambivalence over the sense of enfranchisement on campus

There were many disparate views were expressed on this matter, but all echo each other in striking the same theme or conclusions concerning faculty or student efficacy. Differences are more a matter of degree than of opposite conclusions. Experience with the governance process and past practices in the toleration of dissent, may be the sources of much political cynicism and apathy. Students often expressed doubt over whether their disagreements are taken seriously or had any effect on the administration. (Hence, we could hypothesize that the university experience could be a source of political inefficacy and the basis for cynicism and lack of participation in the larger society and politics outside the university. Is there negative learning going on in student’s encounters with the university?) Faculty have directed blame on themselves as well. One comment signifies the problem: “we walk away from our commitments,” i.e., faculty tend not to be

willing to be strongly committed to activism if it detracts from their primary duties and formal obligations. Some campuses reported high degrees of inefficacy among faculty.

The cynicism and apathy that are present among the faculty might be represented in the view that “if anything, there is too much due process: it is tough to make things happen.” (Does this suggest that existing governance processes can interfere with the goal of fostering greater participation?)

Judgments about student’s sense of efficacy likewise reveals much agreement in the general direction of inefficacy, but those that disagree or feel students can make a difference reveal as much about the overall problem as it does the attitudes of the minority of students who are engaged. Even those students who are engaged were seen as relatively uninformed and of necessity had to yield a central faculty role in many processes and decisions, particularly curricular ones.

Students have strictures over many of their affairs, particularly regarding student life and activities. But within the regulations and policies spelled out in various handbooks students manage most of their own affairs. On many, if not most campuses, students elected representatives to university committees.

But it is not too much to say that students are often characterized by much indifference. At many schools there was no tradition or ethos of discussion and debate; perhaps a result of the merged influence of rampant vocationalism with the commodification processes mentioned previously and corporatization. Too often students do not see student government as a vehicle for discussion and debate or for change. At the risk of striking too negative a tone, it is worth citing the views of some of the worse campus situations because it points to the contradictions shaping student’s views on these issues. One reporter noted that students were nearly unanimous in believing they have no influence on college governance. Ironically, however, they still believed that the university promoted democratic values. These same students believed that there were not adequate channels for communicating different viewpoints on campus and that and decision-making is controlled by an elite few.

On another campus, the sentiment was that “overwhelming power” on campus issues was held by the administration. The view that there were restrictions on free speech, and to some extent, association, communicates contradictory lessons to students on a campus that in principle supports the creation of a democratic citizenship. Faculty likewise feel powerless and cynical. “One student leader observed that faculty seem to feel even more powerless than students...”

The fundamental notion of why efficacy is so important to participation is the belief that individual involvement and action can make a difference. In modern society or in large complex organizations with layers of bureaucracy and hierarchical structures through which decisions percolate, the “distance” of the individual from the final decision or outcome may affect their sense of efficacy. Some sites reported the feeling that the university is a microcosm of the larger society and therefore, is but a reflection of

it with similar states and levels of apathy. Other more optimistic views held that while there was much cynicism and sense of inefficacy with regard to national politics most students, faculty and administrators have found that “direct action”-- in the form of civic engagement with the community--was a means of realizing heightened efficacy with regard to civic responsibility and democratic decision-making.

Rights: understanding, exercising, codifying

There is real ambiguity about knowledge of, the locus of, and the extension of particular rights to students. Students generally did not have a clear idea about institutional arrangements and offices devoted to informing them and assisting them in protecting their rights. The notion pervaded that “there are more policies than rights.” Ombudsman at most institutions were not very active. And while most institutions had formal offices or various committees and written policies about due process or procedural means of dealing with input, complaints or rights issues—there was a general sense that specific problems often were addressed at the lowest level of university organization—often beginning with department chairs.

Most students learn about their rights from other students, followed by faculty, advisors and university publications. The power of the peer group to shape these attitudes seems critical and possibly a bit ironic (the “blind leading the blind”?) Many students said they learned about their rights from peers and personal contacts. It is possible that because most students feel initially that they are somewhat adequately informed about their rights that they believe they can find more information about them when they need it. But in general it is hard to judge the extent of students real knowledge about their rights.

Most institutions have codified and published regulations and codes about student rights and obligations, but despite the plethora of information available, it is generally perceived as difficult for students to get information. Often there is no single office or entity or publication that deals with students’ rights. In one instance, an Office of Student Affairs may deal mainly with social issues and not rights per se. There may be a Student Judiciary Committee that deals with academic integrity issues and an Equal Opportunity Office to deal with affirmative action cases. Information is dispersed in many sources, such as web sites. There may not be a specifically designated office for complaints, though many different avenues of redress. In fact, it may be argued that American colleges and universities in light of traditions of free speech and academic freedom and organizational cultures and missions that at least minimally commitments to individual rights available to any U.S. citizen, have evolved elaborate, though at times Byzantine, channels for adjudication of the rights and interests of students and faculty alike.

On this issue, as with others in the study, size and type of institution made a difference as well. The greater the homogeneity of the campus the less concern there was about rights. More heterogeneous campuses or those committed to enhancing and ensuring diversity appeared to devote more attention to these issues and have more

channels available for the redress of grievances. Some viewed this issue as a matter of general student satisfaction rather than apathy, prompting the question--does like-mindedness induce complacency?

One of the most interesting findings that came through in several of the reports was that international students, after their arrival in the United States, frequently expressed surprise or incredulity at the perception that American students did not seem to care as much about their rights or the right to vote as they would have expected. One informant noted this, saying international students are “uniformly shocked by the dissoluteness of their American counterparts.” These “outsiders” detected an obvious apathy about voting among American students. One faculty report noted that international students seemed more concerned about having a sense of personal responsibility, implying (hypothetically speaking) that a sense of personal responsibility for the world around you may contribute to an obligation to vote.

International and Minority Students

Most reports assessment of universities treatment and integration of international and minority students relied on descriptions of formal organizational structures and processes rather than reporting qualitatively on the success of these programs. Many seemed to assume that campus international programs offices informed students of their rights and that international students in particular had adequate information about their rights. As a result there were many vague inferences about foreign student participation in the university, based on the assumption that foreign students were seen like any other student on campus. Hence, there was a reliance on the existence of formal programs for international students and minorities and inferring from formal organizations, publications and processes that these students were being served and have equal opportunity to exercise their rights on campus.

One might assume that traditional American egalitarianism explains this rather trusting and benevolent view of the experience of the international student. One faculty reflected this view in the comment, “we like to see ourselves in others academically and culturally. The university has not yet broken this mindset.” Here again, one suspects that campus size and the degree of homogeneity may play significant roles in how institutions approach the treatment of foreign and minority students. Small institutions have negligible staff working in these areas, often with combined functions. It was difficult to determine across all the cases just how well-integrated these students were into campus life. While foreign students are organized in many official and ad hoc groups on American campuses, visibility remains an issue. However, there was a clear consensus across all sites that international students were afforded equal treatment and standing within the university as for indigenous students.

Many of the reports addressed the rights and participation of minority students in the context of the promotion of diversity policies, access and affirmative action. The proliferation of resource centers, ethnic-oriented study programs, diversification initiatives, ethnically-based student associations and clubs, affirmative action offices and

admissions and curricular initiatives to facilitate minority access to educational opportunities and participation in university life are too many to enumerate easily. But there was great variation in these initiatives depending on the location, size and affiliation of the particular college or university. Determination of the effectiveness and utility of these programs seem to be as much a function of sympathy or ideology as empirical assessment. What is clear from all the reports, however, is that the manner in which universities address the integration of minority students into university life is fundamental to, and reflective of, the institution's larger commitment to democratic values and civic engagement. These efforts are equally important when the communities in which the institution resides has a local population that is primarily a minority group, and frequently shapes the way the institution interacts with the surrounding community. Overall, there was a sense of unfinished business in the integration of minorities into campus life and governance.

Tolerance and Expression

American colleges and universities almost universally offer programs that promote tolerance and diversity. Most are a function of efforts mentioned above at furthering the integration of students into the campus community. Many schools of official positions, such as a Dean of Multicultural Affairs to facilitate program planning and the promotion of tolerance through diversity education. Other examples include centers and programs to support minority students, such as "program houses" (residential college houses) for African-American students, Jewish students, Latino/Hispanic students and Asian students. An issue that seems to confront university administration is how to respond to "un-represented" groups and how are they to be defined. The difficulty is in assessing if these initiatives have raised the level of tolerance on campus or not. One reporter noted that we can not judge levels of tolerance and trust among peers or through the existence of these programs in the administrative hierarchy. The idiosyncratic character of the demographic composition of most sites in the study makes comparisons of institutions on some scale of diversity and tolerance of others difficult.

Comparisons of tolerance of political expression and unpopular viewpoints awaits the quantitative analysis of survey data. The qualitative assessments do not paint a clear picture. There was in general an assumption at many institutions that they were not much different than most other universities. Formal rights to protest and freedom of speech are codified in regulations and handbooks along with formal grievance procedures at most institutions.

Also, certain psychological dynamics and general sentiments impinge on the realization of espoused goals for civic engagement and tolerance for dissenting views. Small schools reported what one researcher called the "goldfish bowl" effect--where campus culture and life is stifling because everyone knows everybody else.

More importantly, many sites reported cases of self-restraint, or restriction of expression because of the anticipated response of others. This was often cited as a structural condition in faculty – administration relations. "Fear of retribution" was cited

to explain non-participation or constraint of expression. Faculty reported constraining themselves from raising issues or expressing unpopular views. Students often reported constraining themselves from lodging grievances or from expressing their opinions because of fear of retribution from faculty or administration. It is, however, difficult to determine the scope and depth of these opinions or the extent to which they are issue specific or a minority viewpoint as opposed to a general phenomena. Several institutions reported a long history of tolerance for non-mainstream views. But this history is complicated, and at times certain groups with particular religious and political views did not feel welcomed by other student organizations and government or wider university community.

Another form of tolerance, is in the context of classroom debate and discussion. Many institutions reported with pride that many of their classes promoted democratic ideals through classroom assignments and participation. It was not possible to assess from the monographs themselves the extent to which democratic pedagogical practices had permeated curricula and if in fact this promoted tolerance for the expression of unpopular views or not.

There was a general sentiment that students and the university community in general had myriad ways to meet collectively to share common values and to work together on issues of common interest. In addition, apart from service-learning initiatives and specific programs for community partnership and engagement, most schools had numerous outreach programs, continuing education programs and other avenues for the university to connect with the community beyond its boundaries.

Community Relations

Many campuses reported tensions in their relations with the local community. In addition to the usual “town and gown” problems, relations often are exacerbated by racial differences for institutions in urban settings. Some of the most contentious issues had to do with housing and other land development issues pertaining to residential living arrangements for students and university’s plans for land around the campus. Student behavior off-campus was frequently cited as a major issue, and convoluted in some cases where student government exercised self-governance over student life issues. Community leaders often give poor marks for the university’s ability to follow-through, at times accusing the university of not keeping commitments. Relations with the community can be strained over a seemingly minor issue such as parking.

In some cases the university had better relations with the city and regional governments than with neighborhood community groups. This is because of the larger interests in land development and the economic impact of universities and has resulted in much cooperation over seizure of land through *eminent domain* provisions, or in cooperation with a university in bond issues for construction of university facilities and public works around campus. The economic impact of the university on the community is very determinative of relationship with the community. Community residents recognize

this, but whether this leads to conflict or cooperation varies across all sites. At sites where the university has not developed a coherent institutional response or strategic plan for dealing with its impact on the community or ways to improve community relations, the community seems better able to express the impact of the university on the community than the university can itself. Too often the university is not self-conscious about its impact on the community until some crisis (eg., rising crime against university staff and students), or the need to improve the university's reputation (eg., due to declines in enrollment), or some financial exigency (eg., need for new facilities) compels it to look outward.

Sites that had weak involvement in the community relied on traditional roles and structures of interaction with the community. In these situations, the tapping of faculty expertise, the proximity of student residential life, or individual university staff participation in community organizations and activities are the primary links. Often the contributions of the faculty, students and staff to community life makes an "impressive list" but there is a lack of institutionalization and coordination. Several sites reported that students were "not informed" about the university's outreach programs or what was being done in the community. In this regard, sites can be classified by the degree to which they relied on individual contacts of university students, faculty and staff versus institutional programmatic commitments in describing their community relations

It is clear, however, that engagement with the community is fast becoming not only a moral obligation, but an educational necessity essential to maintaining the relevance of universities to society. Because community engagement is in the process of being redefined and reconceptualized, there continues to be a wide variety of experiences and depth of engagement among institutions. The most involved institutions demonstrated the university's commitments to civic engagement through presidential speeches, official planning documents, mission statements and other policy and curricular initiatives. Presidential leadership seems to make a significant difference in the amount and degree of community engagement. One site reported over 60 projects and centers devoted to connecting the university to the community. It also seems clear that those sites reporting involvement in service-learning initiatives seemed to have a greater number of collateral programs working in and with the community.

New strategic plan to engage the community and place it at the center of the college's curricular, extracurricular and facilities development are being developed by many of the sites in this study. Previously, institutions regarded themselves as separate, but as one researcher noted, "it became clear that disengagement was both impractical and immoral." One issue seems pervasive in regard to relations with surrounding communities: universities do not like to take inferior positions in these relationships. Universities are traditionally very powerful vis-à-vis their communities, and most have a history of ignoring or not being fully cognizant of community interests. Many in the past would assume that community interests were coterminous with university interests.

Recognizing such asymmetries of power and accommodating community interests appears to be a pre-requisite for successful engagement in the community.

Urban engagement is now a core element of many of the reported site's identity. Redevelopment of land, buildings and infrastructure is at the center of most of these new outreach initiatives. Most are not simply capital development plans, but involve the integration of the university's educational mission and service to societal goals and government policies. In one example in this study illustrates the type of development universities have undertaken in the past decade. Trinity College developed a "learning corridor" with complex of public and thematic magnet schools, family support programs and community-building initiatives. Such comprehensive initiatives share the belief that the community must be fully engaged as a partner and not simply as a recipient of university actions. An underlying theme of such activity is the assumption that equality and justice are "pre-requisites" for successful democracies and the communication of democratic values can come through civic engagement and civic education. This is the nexus that links community development initiatives to the educational mission. This has involved not only sending faculty and students into the community through service-learning programs, but also opening the university to community access. Typical initiatives include:

- Opening courses to the community (some on a fee basis, others free);
- Starting a non-traditional continuing education program;
- Making facilities available for free;
- Providing opportunities for the community to participate in campus activities;
- More public access to lectures and programs;
- Easier access to sports and recreation facilities.

An important means for colleges and universities to interact with their surrounding communities is through community access to their facilities. In the United States this is a common occurrence, though institutions vary tremendously on the extent to which they open their facilities to community groups. At the low end of access, universities may only allow use-for-fee arrangements, or even in the instance of public lectures or programs, discourage community attendance through a lack of communication or other public relations efforts. The more highly involved institutions actively promote access to their facilities as a means of providing support for community social, political and economic programs, including financial subsidies. Many sites reported relatively positive assessments of the university's relationship with the community, but are unclear about the extent to which these initiatives permeate throughout the university. Eg., many sites reported that their institution offered many courses in service-learning, with as many as 60 courses being offered as evidence of commitment and depth of involvement. But this is a very small percentage of courses in the entire curriculum. A better indicator would be the number of students who enroll in a service learning course before graduation.

Service learning has been mentioned as one of the primary means of facilitating student engagement in the community. Several institutions also reported the central role

internships can play in student participation in community work and life. For sites without well-developed community relations and outreach programs, internship may be the primary means of interaction between students and the community. Besides the learning experiences related to the job, internships have an important role to play in the development of democratic and civic values. One site reported that such experiences “situate the student in the broader democratic and secular contexts which most of them will inhabit upon graduation.” Here students learn to negotiate differences and may be the students first opening to the expectations they will face in the wider society.

Government, Media and Business Relations

There are an increasing number of collaborative efforts between universities and surrounding business community in form of workshops, programs, lectures. This can take the form of programs that specifically links with community business and education groups. Relationships with local government can be complicated by the fact that some universities are an official state agency, and often its legal authority may supercede the local community on some issues.

Eminent domain time and again is the most sensitive issue for universities relations with the surrounding community. Because of its legal status, often as a result of its agency as a state institution, universities can and have used their legal powers to seize and control land and property adjacent to the university.

Many universities have developed special relationships with local businesses and economic development alliances with local government, business and social groups. The Beacon Council, for example, works with Florida International University to promote job creation, and economic growth through coordination of community-wide programs and incentives for minority businesses. The scope of joint programs and initiatives involving university and community organizations, business, or governmental structures cover problems of the natural environment, school-based and other educational initiatives such as special programs targeting “at risk” and minority populations, technological and other expert support, business enterprise and entrepreneurial incubators, real estate development and a host of cultural and artistic collaborations and sponsorships.

Despite such initiatives, many faculty and students have little awareness of the existence of such programs, let alone any purpose in promoting civic engagement or democracy. This may be because the motivation for such programs are more utilitarian and purposive in trouble-shooting or addressing a particular problem while the democratic and civic engagement benefits are assumed to be implicit in the rationales justifying university-community collaborations.

Such initiatives have become commonplace in American higher education and have fundamentally altered the nature of university-community relations of the past decade. The most important issue in relation to the central concerns of this project is the extent to which such initiatives are result of institutional commitment and action or by

which university support for such activities are indirect and incidental to programs and policies but are the result of the individual involvement of faculty, student, and staff.

In some instances, University officials have ex officio or official positions on local government agencies or boards and Chambers of Commerce.

Other Findings, Conclusions and Unresolved Questions

Nearly all the sites in this study reported what one researcher called, “moments of agreement” between all constituent groups in the university on issues of civic engagement, democratic practices, and education for democracy and civic engagement. These represent a consensus on principles of free speech, the potential of the university to effect social transformation, and valuing democratic decision-making. Free speech is the most commonly expressed value in this regard, especially as linked as it is to intellectual and academic freedom.

There is general agreement on that the university can and should serve as an agent of social transformation.

While university constituents believe in democratic decision-making, they generally agreed “that the university does not act like a democracy” due to too much hierarchy, bureaucracy and processes of exclusion (eg., committees that only have recommendation power).

It was noted above that civic engagement and participation in campus governance and political activities varied by discipline. The perceived challenge to engaging faculty and students in the sciences, business and other technical areas needs further examination. Does such disengagement, perhaps a result of the particular disciplinary and pre-professional curricular demands, predict disengagement and non-participation in the civic and political life of the community in later life? Or are these merely cases of deferral of assuming the roles and obligations of citizenship? These are possibly important control groups for testing the normative assumptions of this project and for assessing the impact of democratic education and civic engagement opportunities on the development of student attitudes and political beliefs and practices.

Diverse perspectives concerning democracy and democratic ideals are not trivial. The conflict that can result from the ‘free expression’ of a “cacophony” of voices or the competition of competing interests demands greater attention to the development of democratic institutions and processes and vigilance in the maintenance of unbiased due process and enforcement of rules and procedures. This study, in the individual site reports, raised important questions about realities of democratic practices and citizenship “that fall short of the ideal.”

Who drives these issues and sets the democratic and civic engagement agenda on campus? Does university administration take proper account of external forces? Does

proactive leadership correlate with the degree of ‘activeness,’ commitment, and effectiveness of engagement on a particular campus?

Does like-mindedness among students or faculty induce complacency? In homogeneous environments in this study the absence of democratic processes was not seen as problematic. In relatively secure settings where the surrounding community is not impinging upon the institutions or impacting it in terms of crime, poverty, lack of infrastructure, there is less incentive to develop community relations through civic engagement and civics education?

Should we distinguish between the nature and type of activities present on campus? Have we sufficiently questioned our assumptions about the relationship between democratic education (democratic pedagogy), education for democracy (democracy education), service-learning, civic engagement and civic education and education for civil society?

Are programs and activities in civic education and engagement institutionalized? Is there ‘alignment’ between university commitments and plans and the administration and execution of them? I.e., do rewards, promotion and standards of accountability reflect espoused commitments for civic engagement and democracy education?

Do formal roles and programs produce the desired result? Does actual practice correspond with espoused goals and objectives and articulation of policy? In many cases the perception of the university’s engagement and activities differed from the reality. This may suggest that in these instances a better job needs to be done in communicating and promoting these activities (perhaps with the consequent result that more faculty and students would become involved in the community).

Does service learning and promotion of civic engagement take precedence over alternative activities and teaching of democracy and democratic processes? Is there an unexamined assumption that service learning and civic engagement is essential to the political socialization of students and the university community for democracy? A couple of sites reported a clear correlation between service learning and engagement in campus politics, but the causal relationship is indeterminative. Could it be that the same students who would be predisposed to participate in campus governance are also the ones most pre-disposed to take part in service learning courses? It is important in subsequent work to try and examine the causal connection because the assumption at the root of service-learning programs is that they promote democratic attitudes and participation. Are institutions more democratic or more successful in teaching democratic values because they have highly developed service-learning and civic engagement programs or do they have these programs because they are more democratic in the first place?

What impact does the organizational culture have on the university’s commitment and practice of civic education and democracy? This was referred to above as the ‘alignment’ issue.

What is the trajectory of universities toward ‘progress’ in and sustainability of civic engagement and democracy education programs? Are these programs being institutionalized? Do they rely too heavily on “soft” money? What is really the depth of penetration of these programs in a university? Is one dynamic individual or small group of individuals responsible for pushing the agenda and to constantly lobby for it?

In this regard it is important that criteria for evaluation are not all simply a restatement of values and norms. Eg., if offering service learning opportunities is good, then more service learning courses means that the university is doing more good in the community. The normative motivation for doing the work becomes the criteria for judging its effectiveness. Also, such initiatives and programs exist in the context of other curricular and degree requirements. As noted previously, most sites reported greater degrees of democratic and civic engagement in the social sciences and humanities, and significantly less or no engagement coming out of the natural sciences, business and other technical areas. Advocates for the civic engagement agenda view the issue primarily as a problem of narrowness of focus and excessive specialization and pre-professionalism that characterizes so much of the curriculum and curricular choices of students, and attribute the lack of engagement to these phenomena. The issue is not that universities must make a choice between competing educational missions, but how they can resolve the apparent contradictions between competing goals within the constraints of time, available resources and the human capital, and certification needs that drive student demand for particular training and degree programs. Even in instances where certain sites were characterized by greater activity and engagement, too often these initiatives were highly concentrated within the university community. While this may be a function of the existing organizational culture and the inertia of institutional and bureaucratic practices, it suggests that an important challenge to the creation of more democratic institutions and greater civic engagement and education will be to move beyond the work of the elites and advocates who serve as change agents for this agenda to also ‘democratize’ and broaden participation in these initiatives.

How is the governance role exercised? This relates to how influence is exercised and the role of custom and practice in shaping decisions.

How does ‘anticipated response’ affect engagement? If people think participation does not affect decision making, they will be less likely to avail themselves of existing channels and means of giving input or participating in the consultative process (or decision-making process). Has “consultation” taken precedence over actual or more direct participation in decision-making? On the other hand, are we making too many assumptions about requirements for direct participation in decision-making in making judgments about the effectiveness of campus democracy? Many of the sites for example, reported similar consultative roles for faculty and students in the multi-layered governance structures and processes of the institution. Where there has been a history of struggle and contentiousness over the prerogatives of faculty and students or a dispute over due process, the resulting “democratic expectation” is that consultation and recommendations from stakeholders and members of the university community will be solicited from decision-makers regardless of their legal authority to act autonomously.

Campuses that have a “legitimization of authority” as a result of such consultative processes and traditions appear to be seen as more democratic and more civically engaged.

Many of the reports make reference to bodies such as student life organizations or residential living offices that are consulted in decisions, but these organizations are not themselves organized democratically. Who elects Resident Advisors? Or the university staff that may serve on these bodies?

It is not possible to generalize about whether there is a private – public distinction in terms of democratic practices. Some private colleges and universities are very democratic and others are characterized by autocratic decision-making. Likewise with public institutions, where state control imposes special constraints.

It is apparent that *leadership matters*. Clearly one follow-up to this study would be to focus on the role of the college and university president as a determining factor in the development and success of civic education and engagement programs.

What is the nature of the perceptual differences among faculty and students considering their roles, ability to influence a particular situation or process, or on the efficacy of participation? The sentiment that colleges and universities are a reflection of the wider society was prevalent and in instances of highly centralized decision-making lead to the belief that change is too difficult to achieve, or worse, futile.

Methodological issues

This single most persistent and generalized problem in the pilot study was the low response rate on the faculty surveys. The irony of this is that faculty who were surveyed were selected due to their status as “knowledgeable informants”

Many of the studies relied on descriptive analysis of formal structures. The problem this poses for analysis is that in cases where the researcher was inexperienced or lacked proper supervision, or did not have sufficient longevity at the institution to understand where formal structures and roles diverged from processes and the real exercise of power and influence over decision-making, there was a tendency to infer democratic practices and a high degree of civic engagement from the existence of formal institutional and organizational structures. In a few instances, the monographs were more an opportunity to highlight an institution’s achievements and commitments to the core propositions of this project, and resulted in ‘cheerleading’ and superficial analysis.

In this vein, there was also the tendency to rely on publications, announcements, and official information communicated through catalogues, brochures, and internet web site postings rather than on clarifying interviews with knowledgeable informants.

There is a need to look more carefully at the interactions between faculty and students in understanding their mutual roles in university governance. One researcher noted that students know less about their role in governance than faculty knew about the students' role in governance.

One collaborating researcher noted that “when differences within categories outweigh the differences between them, it is time to construct new categories. This may be true of university communities.”

Regarding choice of collaborating researchers and methodology—could it be that the viewpoints espoused were determined as much by the collaborating researchers' interest in the subject matter? Were there more positive assessments (or more negative) from those who are most engaged in their own professional life in the Service Learning movement or in various community outreach and community education programs?

Note the Heisenberg Principle at work and has both positive and negative impacts. It is good from the standpoint of the normative objectives of the project—it stimulates strategic planning, and has raised awareness about the core issues.

If universities are the key policy instruments of governments in these areas, then there is a real need for better research at the institutional level. This project helps advance this goal.